

the elder Christopher Rich. The younger Christopher, identified as a bachelor from the parish of St Clement Danes, was married by license to Martha Gregory of St Botolph, Aldersgate, on 16 August 1733.

Christopher Mosyer Rich presumably continued as a co-patentee and treasurer of the company headed by his brother, but the accounts and playbills made very few references to him after 1723–24. He was cited in the books in 1725, 1726, and 1727 and then not again (though we do not have all the accounts) until 1759. On 22 September 1760 he was mentioned as receiving £1 daily from Covent Garden Theatre.

Rich died on 4 February 1774 in Cecil Street, the Strand, according to the *Town and Country Magazine*. The *Gentleman's Magazine* later dated his death 5 February at the age of 81. Rich had made his will on 23 December 1769. He gave his house in Cecil Street to his wife Martha. He wished all his stocks or money in public funds to be divided into four equal parts, one-fourth for his wife, two-fourths for his daughter Mary Dorothy Rich, and one-fourth for his son John Bowley Rich, who had previously received a settlement. The will was proved on 18 February 1774. No mention was made in the will of any share in the patent of Covent Garden Theatre. According to the will of John Rich's widow, Priscilla, written in 1778 and proved in 1783, Christopher Mosyer Rich's daughter Mary Dorothy had by 1778 become the wife of Cuthbert Potts, an apothecary in Pall Mall.

Rich, Henry [fl. 1714–1726], *pit office keeper*.

Henry Rich witnessed the will of the theatre manager Christopher Rich in 1714 and may by then have been working at one of the theatres in London. On 8 July 1715 at the new Lincoln's Inn Fields playhouse (which was managed by John Rich) Henry received a solo benefit and received a gross payment of £124 1s. 6d. He was identified as the theatre's pit office keeper. He received similar benefits in June 1716 and May 1717. The theatre accounts show a pension payment of 5s. to Henry Rich on 16 September 1726. Henry was surely related to Christopher Rich and his sons John and Christopher Mosyer, but in what way we do not know.

Rich, Henry [fl. 1763–1767], *French horn player*.

Lillywhite in *London Coffee Houses* notes that in the *Universal Director* in 1763, under the heading "Masters & Professors of Music," is listed the Prince of Orange Coffee House in the Haymarket, operated, apparently, by Henry Rich, French horn player. Henry was surely the Mr Rich who played in the band at Covent Garden Theatre and was on the payroll as of 14 September 1767 at a salary of 5s. daily.

Rich, John, called "Lun" 1692–1761, *dancer, actor, manager, author*.

John Rich was christened at St Andrew, Holborn, on 19 May 1692, the son of the lawyer and theatre manager Christopher Rich and his wife Sarah, née Bewley. He was one of many children—seven we know of. It seems almost certain that only John Rich and his brother Christopher Mosyer Rich survived their father, according to the research of Paul Sawyer, who has written several articles dealing with Rich and his family. The boys' mother





Beard Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum

JOHN RICH
artist unknown

was buried on 22 October 1694; their father died on 4 November 1714 and was buried at St Andrew, Holborn, on the seventh. By that time Christopher Rich had almost completed his new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, using the royal patent originally granted to Sir William Davenant at the beginning of the reign of Charles II. In the elder Rich's will he gave three-quarters of the patent to John and one-quarter to Christopher Mosyer; the rest of the estate was to be divided equally between the two sons. Though Christopher Mosyer took some part in the Rich theatrical ventures in the years that followed, it was John who ran the enterprise and became one of London's most powerful theatre managers and popular performers.

The Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre opened on 18 December 1714 with *The Recruiting Officer*; John Rich, dressed in mourning, is said by Fitzgerald in his *New History of the English Stage* to have spoken an elegiacal prologue. The new house was evidently very elegant. The prologue called the theatre a "stately pile," and we know that mirrors adorned the interior of the 56'-by-100' structure. *The Censor* on 13 April 1717 said, "the greatest Pleasure that I receiv'd through the whole *Play*, was to observe those *Original Pictures* that were the Ornaments of the Gallery and could not help taking notice that the Noseless Sir *William Davenant* had more fearful Starers from the *Pit* than any of the rest of his Fraternity." Lincoln's Inn Fields became the rival of Drury Lane Theatre for the following 18 years. The company that Christopher Rich and his son John had recruited for the new house included not only young beginners like John himself but also experienced performers who left Drury Lane to help form the new troupe, among whom were John Leigh, Theophilus Keene, James Spiller, Jane Rogers, Laetitia Cross, and the Bullock family; but the triumvirate of managers at Drury Lane still had the stronger company, and it was several years before Rich could compete on an equal footing.

We do not know how much experience John Rich had when he took over his father's theatrical venture. On 10 November 1715 he played the Earl of Essex (the leading part) in *The Unhappy Favorite*, and though he seems to have fancied himself in later years a good coach for tragic actors and may have longed to be



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Frontispiece to *Harlequin Horace*
engraving by Van der Gucht

one himself, there is no evidence beyond his playing of Essex that he ever tried much serious acting. He had a flair for comic dancing, however, and was the London manager most responsible for popularizing the variety bills so typical of the eighteenth-century theatres in London. From the very opening of his Lincoln's Inn Fields playhouse Rich recognized the pleasure his audiences received in seeing something more than just a play during an evening's entertainment, and his own ability as a dancer led him by 1716 to emphasize dance offerings in the "Italian style."

One of his earliest efforts in the direction of dance was the engaging of little Marie Sallé and her brother Francis for the 1716–17 season. Marie was nine when she first appeared at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 18 October 1716. Rich may have danced in "A new Italian Mimic Scene between a Scaramouch, Harlequin, Country Farmer, His Wife, and others" on 26 December of that year; the piece was later titled *Harlequin Executed*, and by June 1717 it had become a pantomime, presumably of



Harvard Theatre Collection
JOHN RICH, as Harlequin Dr Faustus
artist unknown

Rich's devising. On 22 April 1717 came the first reference to "Lun," the name which John Rich used throughout his career when he appeared in pantomimes. He was in "An Italian Night Scene" called *The Cheats; or, The Tavern Bilkers* with the dancers Shaw and Thurmond as Punch and Scaramouch. Rich was Underplot (Harlequin) in *The Jealous Doctor* on 29 April and Harlequin in *Harlequin Executed* on 30 May.

Though the Sallé children proved very popular and Rich's pantomimes pleased, the company almost went bankrupt. Steele wrote his wife at the end of the 1716–17 season:

I write this from Richmond, where I have been since yesterday morning at a Lodging near Wilks {one of the Drury Lane managers}, who I believe, will bring matters to bear so that there will be no Play-House but Ours {Drury Lane}, allowing Rich, who is almost broke, a Sallary while there is but one House. I am in hopes one way or other to let the Courtiers do as unthankfully as they please, I shall pick up a Comfortable fortune.

The *Weekly Packet* of 28 September–8 October 1717 reported that Rich had assigned his patent

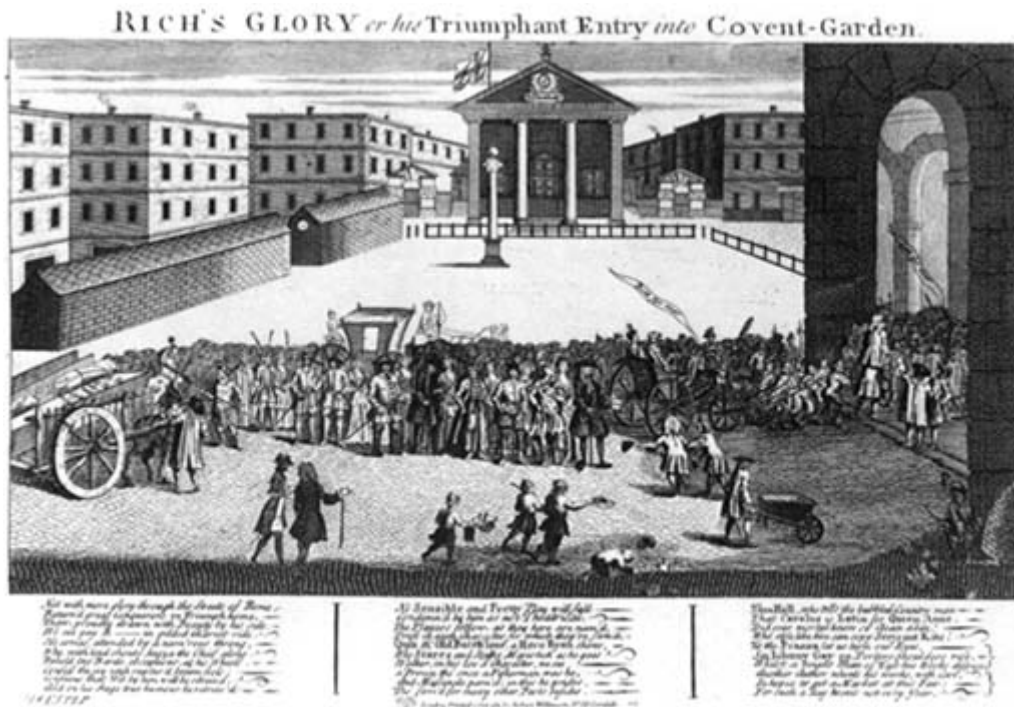




Harvard Theatre Collection
JOHN RICH, as Harlequin
engraving by Wilkinson

to Theophilus Keene and Christopher Bullock.

The 1717–18 season began under the delegated management. Rich still performed, and he and his brother were given benefits throughout the season, usually weekly. John appeared as Underplot (Harlequin) in *The Jealous Doctor*, Vulcan in *Mars and Venus*, Harlequin in *Colombine*, Harlequin in *The Cheats*, Harlequin in *Harlequin Executed*, and Harlequin in *Amadis*. Though he had not yet learned successful management, he had found his niche as a harlequin and had popularized the Italian-style pantomime in opposition to John Weaver's purer, more classical pantomimes at Drury Lane. The competition was keen. Weaver had produced *The Loves of Mars and Venus* on 12 October 1717; by 22 November Lincoln's Inn Fields put on *Mars and Venus; or, The Mouse Trap*, with Rich as Vulcan. Where Weaver had kept to the classical story and, evidently, presented a mute, danced entertainment,



Collection of Edward A. Langhans
 "Rich's Glory"
 engraving by Hogarth.

Rich's work mixed a grotesque subplot with the old legend, after the Italian manner, with songs and dialogue. In his *Life of Garrick* Thomas Davies described this species of pantomime:

{I}t consisted of two parts, one serious, and the other comic. By the help of gay scenes, fine habits, grand dances, appropriate music, and other decorations, he exhibited a story from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, or some other fabulous writer. Between the pauses or acts of this serious representation he interwove a comic fable consisting chiefly of the courtship of Harlequin and Columbine, with a variety of surprising adventures and tricks which were produced by the magic wand of Harlequin; such as the sudden transformation of palaces and temples to huts and cottages; of men and women into wheelbarrows and joint-stools; colonnades to beds of tulips; and mechanic shops into serpents and ostriches.

Rich was clearly borrowing from the old Italian Renaissance tradition of the *intermezzi*—song and dance entertainments performed between the acts of revived classical plays—and the popular *commedia dell'arte* characters. His vulgarized pantomimes proved immensely popular as time went on, and to compete with Rich, Weaver had to introduce similar impurities into his works.

Elaborate and expensive scenery was a hallmark of pantomimes; straight plays were usually staged with stock settings, as Tate Wilkinson noted in his *Memoirs*:

In the magnificence of theatres, the scenery and lighting are now beyond compare; but it is evident our grannies had an idea of what they did not possess, as may be proved by the orders for scenery in Sr. William Davenant's plays, Dryden's *Tempest*, King Arthur, Lee's *Constantine*, *Cyrus the Great*, &c. &c. Except in Mr Rich's pantomimes, the



Harvard Theatre Collection
 Called JOHN RICH and MARGARET WOFFINGTON
 engraving by Finden, after Smallfield

public then had seldom any scenery that proved of advantage, so as to allure the eye:—But now frequently we have new scenery to almost every piece.

The death of Theophilus Keene disturbed the patent arrangement toward the end of the 1717–18 season, but in 1718–19 the Rich brothers again farmed out the management, took an unusual number of benefits (presumably in lieu of a regular share of the profits), and added novelty by bringing in a French company under the management of Francisque Moylin. During Moylin's engagement, from November to February, the Rich brothers usually took their benefits on nights the foreigners performed, the receipts running as high as £157 12s. 6 *d.* but once dropping to £61 13s. In January and February 1719 John played Harlequin in *Amadis*, but he is not known to have performed in any other works during the season.

By this time Rich had married. He was 24 when he and Henrietta Brerewood of St James, Westminster, were married at St Clement Danes. Rich was described in the register as an Esquire of Gray's Inn and a bachelor. He and Henrietta had a son, John, born on 3 May 1720, christened at St Martin-in-the-Fields on 31 May, and buried there on 28 February 1721. Perhaps the couple had other children, but Paul Sawyer, who discovered the above information, found no other baptismal records. Henrietta Rich died in 1725 and was buried at St Andrew, Holborn, on 28 September.

From the several benefit bills in 1719–20 it would appear that the Rich brothers were still farming out the management. John continued appearing as Harlequin in *The Cheats* and in *The Jealous Doctor*. A note made by Latreille suggests that the management reverted to the Riches in 1720–21, but another stated that

Christopher Bullock and George Pack were in charge and lost money thereby. The benefit bills would suggest that the latter was true and that John and Christopher did not take back full control until the following season, but among the Additional Charters at the British Library is a document dated 1 November 1720 in which the brothers are referred to as the managers of the players at Lincoln's Inn Fields. The delegated managers had not been successful, and, according to *An Impartial State of the Present Dispute Between the Patent and Players* (1733), when Rich took back the patent he had to "submit to the loss of £2000 Value in his Wardrobe, etc." In 1720–21, in addition to his usual harlequin parts, Rich appeared as Harlequin in a dance called *Harlequin, Scaramouch, and a Countryman* on 25 April 1721 and probably was Harlequin in the pantomime *The Magician* on 30 March. The following season he and Spiller danced a *Scene between Harlequin and Countryman*.

As company manager John Rich was often faced with problems, not the least of which were unruly patrons. The *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post* of 4 February 1721 reported that at a performance of *Macbeth* on 1 February "Mr Berkly, Cornwallis, Fielding, and another ... made a Disturbance there, with an intent (as 'tis said) to take off one of the Actresses; but being disarm'd, and committed to the Roundhouse, they are under Prosecution for a Riot." Victor in his *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin* said that when a drunken earl tried to cross the stage while the performance was in progress, Rich had stopped him saying,

I hope your Lordship will not take it ill, if I give orders to the Stage-Doorkeeper not to admit you any more. On his saying that, my Lord saluted Mr *Rich* with a Slap on the Face, which he immediately returned; and his Lordship's face being round and fat made his Cheek ring with the Force of it. Upon this spirited Return, my Lord's drunken Companions collected themselves directly, and Mr *Rich* was to be put to Death; but *Quin, Ryan, Walker, &c. &c.* {Rich's actors} stood forth in Defence of the Manager and a grand Scuffle ensued, by which the Gentlemen were all drove out at the Stage-Door into the Street.

The rioters did enough damage to the theatre to close it down for two days.

On 12 April 1722 the Rich brothers signed an agreement with the managers of the rival Drury Lane Theatre not to steal one another's performers, and a list of the members of each troupe shows that by that date Rich had built a company capable of competing on an equal footing. Among his strengths were the Bullock family, Lacy Ryan, James Quin, the Spillers, Ann Seymour, Jane Rogers, Laetitia Cross, and the prompter Chetwood. But competition came not only from Drury Lane. A new playhouse, the Haymarket, had opened in 1720 and was in use from time to time by visiting troupes or pick-up companies; also, the King's Theatre regularly featured operas with eminent continental singers. Yet with all this theatrical activity there was audience enough to go around. Sir John Vanbrugh wrote to Jacob Tonson on 18 June 1722 that "The Remnants of Rich, have play'd Something and Somehow, Six times a Week" and that the Drury Lane players made enough to ride in their own coaches. Forty years before London had hardly been able to support a single company.

Rich's most popular pantomime of the 1720s was *The Necromancer; or Harlequin Doctor Faustus*, which came out in 20 December 1723 with Rich as Harlequin. The piece was his reply to the rival troupe's *Harlequin Doctor Faustus*, which had opened at Drury Lane on 26 November. The author of *The Necromancer* is not named in *The London Stage*, but in his handlist of plays Allardyce Nicoll attributes the work to Rich. In addition to dancing in that work, during the 1720s Rich was Harlequin in such new pieces as *Jupiter and Europa*, *Harlequin Sorcerer*, *Apollo and Daphne*, *The Rape of Proserpine*, *The Loves of Damon and Clemene*, *Italian Jealousy*, and *Perseus and Andromeda*.

Hogarth satirized the increasing popularity of pantomimes and other musical entertainments in "Masquerades and Operas" in February 1724. Some verses accompanied the print:

*Could new dumb Faustus, to reform the age,
Conjure up Shakespear's or Ben Johnson's Ghost,
They'd blush for shame, to see the English Stage
Debauch'd by fool'ries, at so great a cost.
What would their Manes say? should they behold
Monsters and Masquerades, where usefull Plays
Adorn'd the fruitfull Theatre of old,
And Rival Wits contended for the Bays.*

The print juxtaposes the opera house and Lincoln's Inn Fields. A sign at Rich's theatre proclaims that "D^r FAUSTUS is Here," a reference to *The Necromancer*. Hogarth depicted on the sign a windmill and dragon, both features of the show. A miller is shown caught in the revolving blades of his windmill while Faustus is making love to the farmer's wife. The dragon devoured Faustus at the end of the pantomime.

The silly pantomimes kept Rich's coffers full, and, though he was ridiculed by some for his garish shows, *The Plain Dealer* on 1 January 1735 complimented him for operating with taste and reason, for reviving the best of the old plays, and for encouraging new playwrights. It was, the author declared, only when business dropped off that Rich resorted to pantomimes (but the season calendars would hardly confirm that). Rich also featured in his pantomimes some performers of considerable talent, such as Marie and Francis Sallé, now grown up, who appeared in *Apollo and Daphne* in 1725–26 and *The Rape of Proserpine* in 1726–27 and 1730–31. The popular singer Richard Leveridge was in many of Rich's offerings, as were the dancers Poitier and Dupre.

Rich went to vast expense to provide splendid costumes and scenery. *Mist's* on 18 February 1727 reported on *The Rape of Proserpine* (book by Theobald and music by Galliard): "It is of the Nature of Pantomimes, partly grotesque, and partly vocal, but far exceeds all ever yet shewn, in the Magnificence and Beauty of the Scenes, the Number and Richness of the Habits, as well as the Fable, which is purely poetical, as the Italian Operas ought to be." Benjamin Victor said that Rich had a "just Notion of the *public Spectacle*, viz. That no Expencc should be spared—it should be magnificent or nothing." And Davies called Rich "a perfect master of every thing which related to theatrical effect from splendour of dress and magnificence of decoration."

It was too much for some men of taste and wit. In the first *Dunciad*, Book 111, Alexander Pope pilloried Rich:

In yonder cloud, behold!
 Whose sarcenet skirts are edg'd with flamy gold,
 A matchless youth {!}: His nod these worlds controuls,
 Wings the red lightning, and the thunder rolls,
 Angel of Dulness, sent to scatter round
 Her magic charms o'er all unclassic ground: Yon stars, yon suns, he rears at pleasure higher,
 Illumes their light, and sets their flames on fire.
 Immortal Rich! how calm he sits at ease
 Mid snows of paper, and fierce hail of pease;
 And proud his mistress' orders to perform,
 Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

The most important theatrical event at Lincoln's Inn Fields during the 1720s was not a pantomime, however, but the phenomenally successful *Beggar's Opera* by John Gay, with music by Pepusch drawn from folk ballads. The work opened on 29 January 1728 for an unprecedented uninterrupted run of 32 nights and then a continued run that lasted a total of 62 nights. It was revived the following season for another 28 performances by the regular cast and 15 by a company of "Lilliputians." Gay wrote Swift on 20 March 1728 that he had earned between £700 and £800, and Rich had cleared nearly £4000. Swift replied on 28 March that "that rich rogue Rich" should give Gay a gift of two or three hundred guineas. The first two seasons of *Beggar's Opera* performances brought Rich a profit of at least £7200, according to Sir St Vincent Troubridge's calculations in *Theatre Notebook*, 6 (the profit may have been as high as £9000). The ballad opera contributed importantly to the building of the Covent Garden Theatre.

As his theatrical venture was flourishing, so was his personal life. By 2 January 1727 Rich had remarried, to a woman whose Christian name was Amy (sometimes cited as Anne). On that date their daughter Henrietta

(presumably named after Rich's first wife!) was born in St Martin-in-the-Fields; she grew up to marry the actor James Bencraft, after whose death in 1765, according to Tate Wilkinson, she married an attorney named Wood—but Henrietta was still named Bencraft according to the *European Magazine* of January 1813 when she died at Uxbridge in 1812. John and Amy's second daughter, Charlotte, whose birthdate has not been discovered, married the singer John Beard in 1758; she died at Hampton on 26 August 1818, aged about 91. Charles Rich was christened at St Giles in the Fields on 7 February 1729; Mary Rich was christened at the same church on 20 November 1730. The *Daily Courant* of 26 November reported that John Rich gave "a fine Entertainment at his house in Southampton Street, Bloomsbury, on

account of the baptizing of his new-born Son {sic}, when Lord Viscount Gage did him the Honour to stand one of the Godfathers."

On 27 March 1733 Sarah Rich was born; she was christened on 4 May at St George, Bloomsbury; she became Mrs George Voelcker and died on 17 September 1769. Her husband, according to a note in the Burney papers, had been Page of the Back Stairs to George 11. John Rich, the sixth child, was christened at St George's on 5 June 1735 and buried at Hillingdon on 25 August 1737. Elizabeth, the last of John and Amy's children, was born shortly before the death of the infant John; she was buried at Hillingdon on 12 September 1746. *Read's Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* reported on 3 December 1737 that "Early on Saturday Morning {26 November} died of a Hecktick Fever, at her House in Bloomsbury-Square, Mrs Rich, Wife of John Rich, Esq; Patentee of the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden." She was buried at Hillingdon on 1 December.

By about 1730 Rich had perfected his plans for a new theatre, on the site now occupied by the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Though his pantomimes and *The Beggar's Opera* had brought Rich enough money to finance his new playhouse without seeking funds elsewhere, he raised money in the usual way, offering building shares to the nobility and gentry. A prospectus was published on 11 December 1731 and soon Rich had 46 subscribers and pledges of £15,000, though he needed, as Basil Francis discovered (*Theatre Notebook*, 12), only £5600 to pay the builder, Edward Shepherd. Only 17 of the subscribers honored their commitment in full, and when the theatre opened on 7 December 1732 less than £400 had been collected; by 4 October 1733 Rich had received £6700. When all the financing was settled, Rich himself seems to have made about £200 profit on the venture—and a new theatre.

As Howard Vincent showed in *English Literary History* in December 1950, Shepherd left a great deal to be desired as a builder, and Rich registered numerous complaints about the workmanship. When the new playhouse opened, however, it was a splendid building. Rich had Jacopo Amiconi, John Harvey, and George Lambert painting his scenery. Lambert, according to the census of scene painters in *Theatre Notebook*, 19, "had a dispensation from Rich to render the stage as imposing as the collateral aid of painting, machinery, and costume, could raise it...."

The opening was marked by a satirical print, "Rich's Glory, or His Triumphant Entry into Covent Garden," attributed (probably erroneously) to Hogarth. Rich and his actors are shown in procession, with St Paul, Covent Garden, in the background. A poem accompanied the print:

*Not with more glory through the streets of Rome,
Return'd great conquerors in triumph home,
Than, proudly drawn with Beauty by his side,
We see gay R— in gilded chariot ride.
He comes, attended by a num'rous throng,
Who, with loud shouts, huzza the Chief along.
Behold two bards, obsequious, at his wheels,
Confess the joy each raptur'd bosom feels;
Conscious that wit by him will be receiv'd,
And on his stage true humour be retriev'd.
No sensible and pretty play will fall
Condemn'd by him as not theatrical.
The players follow, as they here are nam'd,
Dress'd in each character for which they're fam'd.
Quin th'Old Batch'lour, a Hero Ryan shows,
Who stares and stalks majestick as he goes.
Walker, in his lov'd character {Macheath} we see*

*A Prince, tho' once a Fisherman was he,
And Massanelo nam'd; in this he prides,
Tho' fam'd for many other parts besides. Then Hall, who tells the bubbled countrymen
That Carolus is Latin for Queen Anne.
Did ever mortal know so clean a bite?
Who else, like him, can copy Serjeant Kite!
To the Piazza let us turn our eyes,
See Johnny Gay on porters shoulders rise,
Whilst a bright Man of Tast his works dispise.
Another author wheels his works with care,
In hopes to get a market at this fair;
For such a day he sees not ev'ry year.*

Another poem, "Lines addressed to Rich, on the opening of Covent Garden Theatre, November {sic} 1732," is preserved at the Folger Shakespeare Library:

Thespis, the first of the dramatic race,
Stroll'd in a Cart for gain from place to place.
His Actors rude, his profits came but slow,
The Poet he, and Master of the Show:
To raise attention he employ'd his art
To build another and more costly Cart;
New Asses he procured to drag the load
And gain'd the shouts of boys upon the road.
Awhile the gay machine Spectators drew
The people throng'd because the sight was new;

Thither they hurry'd once and went no more.
 For all his Actors they had seen before:
 And what it was they wish'd no more to see
 The application Lun, is left to thee.

He seems to have kept up his performing despite the heavy demands of management, planning a new theatre, and raising a family. Always advertised as Lun, he almost invariably played Harlequin. New pantomimes in which he danced in the 1730s and 1740s including *Orpheus and Eurydice*, the *Royal Chace* (in which he was Jupiter "in the character of Harlequin"), and *The Fair*. He also regularly revived the popular pantomimes he had presented in the 1720s: *Perseus and Andromeda*, *Apollo and Daphne*, *The Rape of Proserpine*, and *The Necromancer*. One supposes that those pieces went through many transformations, with new effects replacing old ones from time to time. *The London Stage* lists no appearances for John Rich after 8 November 1752, when he danced in *The Fair*. Miles replaced him the following night, but Rich continued active as manager for several years.

There are records of at least two extraordinary accidents at Covent Garden Theatre when Rich was there. On 1 October 1736,

in the Entertainment of Dr Faustus {*The Necromancer*}... when the Machine wherein Harlequin, the Miller's Wife, the Miller and his Man, was got up to the full Extent of its flying, one of the Wires which held up the hind part of the Car broke first, and then the other broke, and the Machine, and all the People in it fell down upon the Stage; by which unhappy Accident the young Woman who personated the Miller's Wife had her Thigh broke, and her Kneepan shatter'd, and was otherways very much bruised, the Harlequin had his Head bruised, and his Wrist strained; the Miller broke his Arm; and the Miller's Man had his Scull so fractured that his Life is despaired of.

According to *The London Stage*, Rich played Harlequin that night but the injury was to his stand-in. The incident sickened Thomas Gray, who was in the audience and wrote Horace Walpole on 6 October that he had "a sort of surfeit of Mr Rich and his cleverness...."

The second accident was as remarkable, according to a clipping transcribed by Reed in his "Notitia Dramatica." At Covent Garden Theatre on 6 February 1739

one John Sommerford a sawyer (who came into the upper Gallery at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden at the latter End of the Play) was pressing forward in order to get a better place, he was pushed by a person who took disgust at his standing before him, which occasioned the Sawyer to lose his footing and he tumbled over into the Pit (the depth of 30 feet) between two rows of the audience with^t. receiving any damage he got up immediately, begging the people to let him pass, swore he wo^d. bring the fellow down with the Devil to him; which he accordingly did, & carried him before a Justice of the Peace who bound him over. When the Sawyer fell down one of his legs hit Mrs Gunter (a broker's wife in High Holborn) on the head which stunned & frightened her very much but Mr. Burrel an eminent Surgeon happening to be in the house came immediately to her assistance, let her blood, & examining if she had received any bruise or wound, found she had not; & about 12 o'clock Mr. Rich sent a Message to know how she did & was answered that she was well. After the whole performance was over Sommerford went to Mr. Rich & facetiously told him that he had made himself free of the Gallery & hoped he sho^d. have the liberty of going into it whenever he pleased; this M^r. Rich consented to with a proviso always that he did not come out of it in the same abrupt manner; to which proviso the Sawyer readily agreed.

In 1740 John Hill accused Rich of stealing his *Orpheus and Eurydice*. (Charles Beecher Hogan in the second of his three *London Stage* volumes credits the work to Rich.) Rich had opened *Orpheus and Eurydice: With the Metamorphosies of Harlequin* on 12 February 1740 at Covent Garden, and Hill, stating that the work was his, wanted payment. Rich published a pamphlet that was noted in the *London Daily Post* on 14 January 1740:

This day is publish'd, price 6^d, Mr. Rich's Answer to the many fallacies & calumnies advanc'd by Mr. John Hill, Apothecary & contain'd in the preface to 'Orpheus, an English Opera,' as he calls it publish'd on Wednesday the 26th Dec last. Ne sutor ultra crepidam. Out of thy own mouth thou shalt be judg'd, thou wicked Liar.

After airing their views back and forth, the paper warriors called it quits, and the *Apology for the Life of T ...* ... C. . . . said Hill sank "into that Obscurity from whence he emerged." (But see our John Hill entry). There is no record of Hill's *Orpheus* having been produced, but then there is no certainty that the

Orpheus presented at Covent Garden was actually Rich's work.

Early in 1744 John Rich needed to secure a sizable loan, and it was necessary for him to prepare an inventory of the costumes, properties, and scenery at Covent Garden Theatre. The inventory is now at the British Library and was transcribed by Philip H. Highfill in *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research* beginning in May 1966. Vast though the list is, the costumes itemized show that Covent Garden had a bare minimum, which confirms George Anne Bellamy's complaint that year that the wardrobe there was "indifferent."

Though David Garrick spent most of his career at Drury Lane, Rich engaged him at Covent Garden for six performances in June 1746 and the full season of 1746–47, when profits are said to have reached £8500. Garrick returned to Drury Lane, and a brisk rivalry developed in 1750–51 when both patent theatres presented *Romeo and Juliet*, with Garrick and George Anne Bellamy at Drury Lane and Spranger Barry and Susanna Maria Cibber at Covent Garden. The competition lasted 12 nights in September and October 1750, and according to the best judges, Barry was ruled the better Romeo.

Rich and Garrick also competed for public favor by staging spectacular processions. In 1755–56, for example, Rich revived Lee's *The Rival Queens*, inserting a triumphal entry of Alexander into Babylon. George Anne Bellamy, who played Statira, wrote that the production was saved by the procession:

This he did with such taste and magnificence, that it excelled every thing of the kind I ever saw. And though it was attended with very great expence, the return made ample amends. Hence, indeed, he might with great justice have produced his snuffbox, and cried, "*It is my triumph.*"

His most lavish display was *The Coronation*, first presented at Covent Garden on 13 November 1761 to celebrate the accession of George III. Count Frederick Kielmansegge saw the piece and described it in his diary (translated by his Countess):

The quantity of people forming the procession, the richness and splendour of the costumes, the accurate copy of the festivities, so far as this can be accomplished on the stage, and the inclusion of the principal features of the Abbey, combined to make the whole a wonderful sight. The scene during the procession, representing stands and houses alike, with numerous lookers-on, was excessively pretty and picturesque. The whole of the Westminster choir sang all the time that the procession was passing across the stage, in exact imitation of the real procession. The same number of cymbals and trumpets were there; the bells were rung; and the guns and regimental bands in lines, through which the procession continually passed, were painted on the scenery. When the Queen came on the stage, followed by the King, cheers were given behind the scenes so realistically, that those who had not seen the actual coronation procession at Westminster Hall could undoubtedly form a pretty accurate idea of them.

During the dinner when the scene representing the galleries in the Hall was filled with people, the coronation anthem, which had been performed in the Abbey, was sung to the accompaniment of a full band.

The dresses, all of which are velvet, gold, and silver, the decorations and other expenses, are said to have cost the owner of the Covent Garden theatre £3000.

Garrick had mounted a procession within his production of *Henry VIII* the previous 30 September, but it was hissed. The *Court Magazine* condemned Garrick's "ill timed parsimony" and praised Rich's spectacle as being far superior. Rich had hoped to march in his own procession, but he was too ill.

Meanwhile, Rich's personal life had taken a new turn. Seven years after the death of his second wife, he married again. His bride, whose stage name was Mrs Stevens, was Priscilla Wilford, and the wedding took place at St Paul, Covent Garden, on 25 November 1744. Paul Sawyer discovered mention of Miss Wilford in the Bishop of London's marriage records; she was called a spinster "upwards of twenty four years," but

Sawyer notes that she was actually about 31, if the *London Evening Post* of 27 November 1744 is to be believed. George Anne Bellamy said that the new Mrs Rich had been in the Covent Garden troupe and had spent several years serving as Rich's housekeeper before they married. She seems to have been highly religious and very greedy, and in *Roderick Random* Tobias Smollett pictured her as a tyrant and Rich as having a head "disordered with superstition." Her tyranny helped reform Rich, who had lived an extravagant libertine life.

When Rich married in 1744, he purchased a country house in Cowley, near Uxbridge, in which the actor Barton Booth was said to have lived. Before that, Rich had had lodgings in Bloomsbury Square till about 1739 and then moved to a house near the Bedford Coffee House and Covent Garden Theatre. He spent a great deal of money improving the Cowley property, according to George Anne Bellamy, and many were pleased to see his money going toward that rather than toward horses and women. *A Letter to a Certain Patentee* (1747) noted that, before Priscilla, Rich had maintained his stable of horses like a nobleman and squandered much of his income.

Mr. R——H, to be sure, has been a great Libertine in his Time, and given to the Flesh; but now, Glory be to G——d for it, the Manifestation of the Proverb is happily come to pass in him, viz. Never too late to mend ... he is now like the lost Sheep that is found: He hath now turn'd the Brothel into a Temple, and he kneeleth to pray where he hath kneel'd heretofore to ——.

He now lived like a gentleman, ran his horses, and educated his daughters properly. But, the author said, Rich had a "whimsical Taste in paintings, wastes many hundreds of Pounds ... and ... he's very often in the Wrong."

The *Letter*, like other publications of the time, commented unfavorably on Rich's abilities as a manager. He was inefficient, the author claimed, for he failed to develop the talent of Mrs Pritchard, he failed to engage first-rate players for the 1747–48 season, and his productions were badly cast. The complaints were at least partly correct. Rich had Lacy Ryan as a leading man, but little else; Quin was engaged that season for only two performances. At Drury Lane, on the other hand, Garrick had the services of Delane, Macklin, Mrs Cibber, Kitty Clive, and Peg Woffington.

The critic went on to say that

when Mr. R—h has been treating and higgling with a first player or two about a Sallery, he has many Times spun out a Month or two of the Season, and after that has given them the same Money for the remainder Part as he might have had 'em for at first: At the same Time bawk'd his House, and play'd three or four Times a Week to less than Charges.

The author said Rich would "sooner cut his Ears off, then suffer them to bear Testimony repugnant to his Will. His own Opinion is a Definitive sufficient. ..." When a player died or left the troupe, Rich would go outside the company to hire a replacement rather than give one of his own actors a chance at larger roles (and a larger salary).

On 13 November 1758 John Lee confirmed some of those complaints, saying that Rich had denied him acting opportunities and contrived to prejudice the public against him. Earlier, in 1743, *The Case Between the Managers of the Two Theatres, and their Principal Actors* had represented Rich of Covent Garden and Fleetwood of Drury Lane as grasping, tasteless, cruel to actors, and thoroughly dishonest. The two managers were shown in a mock conversation in which they favored harlequinades and machine shows to Shakespeare, Congreve, Dryden, and Otway. Rich certainly did not present as many serious plays as did Drury Lane, though he fancied himself an excellent coach of tragic actors, and, as Paul Sawyer noted in Kenneth Richards' and Peter Thomson's *The Eighteenth-Century English Stage*, Rich produced almost as many Shakespearean works as did the rival patent house—an average of 35 per season at Covent Garden to 38 at Drury Lane.

The lengthiest complaint against Rich as a manager came out in the *Theatrical Examiner* in 1757:

What can be this gentleman's motive in giving the publick such a repeated train of plays,—tho' perhaps good ones, yet rendered irksome by repetition,—and bad acting? Has he not had verbal declarations that it won't do.—which have been strongly confirmed by empty benches? The other house will not alone out-play him,—but out-pantomime him. Does not Woodward's *trash* {at Drury Lane}, by wearing the face of *novelty*, balance against his, which are really good, as far as such things can be? ... Merlin's cave {*The Royal Chace*} is truly worn to a *skeleton*. ... To return to his plays; do not his better actors and actresses suffer highly from the ills caused by his *bad* ones?—They not only have the melancholy consolation of seeing the theatre they are in forsaken, but to add to that desertion, their powers are *blasted* by their bad accompaniers. ... {N}ay, they are not without their *black pyramids* at another house, to give beauty to the *lighter* marble!—the difference, is humour and indolence plant them in one place, self-advantage in the other. ...

His conduct to authors and young people actor-bit

is ... inhuman, absurd, and rude ... he will oblige an author to leave his play or performance from month to month, and year to year,—*promise fed*,—and finally return it as a thing totally unfit; ... Nay, some again most astonishingly assert,—that this gentleman will *alter* and *insert* lines of his own; and to crown all—that he has absolutely persuaded himself that a very tolerable farce which has been some years in his hands, is at last—his own writing.

I have heard also, that he has bestowed encomiums on some of his performers, merely, from having the good fortune to displease the town;—this I should believe with great difficulty, was I not almost confirmed in it by an almost similar circumstance, which is, his putting into characters such, as I am certain he is told the town does not like.

He will permit a young man or woman to come and be *tached*,—as *he* terms it,—and tells them they are to come *on* when they are *larnd*,—for which purpose he makes them repeat, and unrepeat; this he also does himself various ways; and if they charge him with a difference in these manners, he tells them, that it will do right that way, or either way repeated:—if they suit his humour,—they shall *come on* this month or season,—if not, the next, which perhaps they pass on in the same fruitless expectations, and the third, he will either dismiss them,—or give a trial: and in all this time he, by his instructions, has taught them to bawl out a chime, without force, feeling, or taste,—yet he will not receive either actor, or actress, that will not undergo his operations.

You will perhaps say, this man has brought on good performances and performers,—true,—but he never *trained* such as were allowed so!

On a number of occasions Rich was remarkably generous. In 1745, according to Reed's "Notitia Dramatica," Rich gave over £600 to the relief of the army in Scotland; by comparison, Drury Lane gave a bit over £131. In 1748 Rich's troupe donated over £400 to those who had suffered from a fire in Cornhill. He was not niggardly when he took his daughters to France in July 1753.

But some of his players may have sighed with relief when they were told on 7 April 1759 that Rich had sold his patent for £40,000 to Bonnell Thornton, an attorney in the City. How much control he retained after that is not clear; a paylist dated 22 September 1760, reprinted in *The London Stage*, gives a detailed account of the company personnel and salaries and shows John Rich receiving £5 5s. and Christopher Rich £1 daily.

John Rich died of "gravel and stone" (said *Lloyd's Evening Post*) on 26 November 1761 at his house next to the Covent Garden Theatre; he was buried at Hillingdon near his second wife Amy and their two infant children John and Elizabeth. At the Folger Library is an undated letter from William Havard the actor to his sailor friend Ben Read; since Havard was active in the theatre in 1761, perhaps the letter was written shortly before Rich's death: "Mr Rich has had a complaint in his knee & leg, but they cannot settle whether it is Rheumatic or Gouty; Be whichever it may, it has had a very bad effect upon his Spirits—he is excessively low; they endeavor to rouse him, to rumble him about, and now and then make him drink a bottle of claret...." Was that the illness that prevented Rich from marching in *The Coronation* and led to his death?

John Rich's tombstone bore the following inscription:

Sacred to the Memory of John Rich Esq.
Who died November 26, 1761, aged 69 Years.
In him were united the various virtues, that
could endear Him to his Family, Friends,
and acquaintance. Distress never failed to
find relief in his bounty: Unfortunate
merit a refuge in his generosity.
Erected Novemb. 1763.

Rich in death was praised by many. The *Public Advertiser* on the day after he died said Rich was a man "to whom the Public is indebted for many years agreeable Entertainment, and who adorn'd domestic Life with all the Virtues of Humanity." In December the *London Magazine* published a poem on him, part of which read:

Think on the num'rous hours of sport
We spent with him in fancy's court!
What ev'nings of supreme delight!
They're past—they're clos'd in endless night.
—For gratitude, for virtue's cause,
Crown his last exit with applause.

Rich's will had been drawn up on 21 May 1761. He said that as long as his wife Priscilla remained his widow she should have the right to dispose of Covent Garden Theatre, the letters patent (he claimed the right to both the Davenant and the Killigrew patents his father

had once held, though John actually had owned only Davenant's; he said nothing of Bonnell Thornton's purchase of the patent in 1759). Until such time as the theatre should be sold—for "a sum adequate to the value thereof"—the management of the playhouse was to be in the hands of Priscilla Rich and John Beard, who had married Rich's daughter Charlotte. The co-managers were to receive £150 annually. Should Priscilla remarry, the management was to go to Beard and Edward Wilford, Priscilla's brother, and they were to be paid £75 annually. If Priscilla died, the co-managers were to seek the "concurrence and approbation" of Rich's four daughters in the running of the theatre.

After expenses were paid, profits from the Covent Garden Theatre enterprise were to be divided equally among Priscilla Rich, Henrietta Rich Bencraft (Mrs James), Charlotte Rich Beard, Mary Rich Morris (Mrs James), and Sarah Rich Voelcker (Mrs George). Rich's house and gardens and income from bonds and other investments were left to Priscilla Rich. Rich left an annuity of £40 to his "reputed natural daughter" Catherine Benson, who was in 1761 at the Convent of the Benedictines at Calais. Her annuity was to continue until the theatre was sold (which it was, in 1767); at that point Catherine was to receive the annual proceeds from £1000 for life or until she married or took vows. She did in fact marry Lieutenant William Colville of the Royal Liverpool Regiment of Foot, as Priscilla Rich's will attests. Sawyer thinks that Catherine may have been the daughter of the Mrs Benson who acted in Rich's company at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre from 1728 to 1731; that seems very likely. Rich's will was proved on 7 December 1761.

Beard took over the management of Covent Garden Theatre, with Mrs Rich remaining (apparently of her own volition) in the background. In 1767 the patent was sold for £60,000 to the elder George Colman, Thomas Harris, John Rutherford, and George Powell. Priscilla Rich died at her brother's house in Chelsea in 1783.

John Rich was remembered long after Covent Garden passed out of the control of his relatives. On 27 January 1770, for example, Covent Garden mounted a pantomime by Woodward, Rich's old rival, called *Harlequin's Jubilee*, which satirized Garrick's *Jubilee* at Drury Lane. At the end, according to the *Town and Country Magazine*, descended

the statue of the late Mr. Rich, under the name of Lun, which he always adopted when he performed the character of Harlequin; and in imitation of the adulation paid to Shakespear, at Drury-Lane, Harlequin, and the rest of the pantomime characters, from the different pieces produced by that genius, who walk in this procession, bow and pay him homage; after which they sing a chorus, in honour of his memory.

Rich must have been well remembered on 3 January 1782, when Drury Lane presented a pantomime entitled *Lun's Ghost; or, The New Year's Gift*. On 28 October of the same year Drury Lane scheduled *Robinson Crusoe*; Horace Walpole was in the audience and found it "unlike the pantomimes of Rich, which were full of wit, and coherent, and carried on a story!"

Even as late as 1796 Rich's name was known to playgoers. On 24 October, when *Harlequin's Treasure* was offered at Covent Garden, the bill listed the show's borrowings, among which were "The Building Scene and Falling Scaffold (from THE SORCERER) invented by Rich," "The Dog Kennel and Pigeon House invented by Rich," "A Landscape painted by Lambert, which changes to the Wash-House Scene (from THE SORCERER) invented by Rich," and "the Transformation of Punch to a Wheel-Barrow invented by Rich."

In his handlist Nicoll credits John Rich with the writing of *Harlequin Executed*, a dance performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 26 December 1716 and turned into a pantomime later, with Rich as Harlequin; *The Jealous Doctor*, a pantomime presented there on 29 April 1717; *Amadis* on 24 January 1718; *The South-Sea Director* in 1720 (which Nicoll questions and *The London Stage* does not list, but surely it was *The Magician; or, Harlequin a Director*, on 16 March 1721); *Jupiter and Europa* on 23 March 1723; *The*

Necromancer on 20 December 1723; *The Sorcerer* in 1724 (which Nicoll questions and *The London Stage* does not list; probably Theobald's *Harlequin a Sorcerer* of 21 January 1725 was the work in question); *Apollo and Daphne* on 20 February 1725 (not to be confused with Theobald's *Apollo and Daphne* on 14 January

1726); and *The Rape of Proserpine* on 13 February 1727 (but *The London Stage* gives that work to Theobald). Of the above early works, *The London Stage* attributes to Rich only *Amadis* and *The Magician*. Also given to Rich are *Orpheus and Eurydice* on 12 February 1740 (attribution made by Hogan in Part v), and *The Fair* on 7 February 1750. We cannot be certain just how much of any of those works Rich actually wrote; he may simply have invented the special effects and dance sequences, for there is some question as to his literacy and ability to write song lyrics and dialogue. Yet Nicoll also attributes to Rich a comedy, *The Spirit of Contradiction*, which opened on 6 March 1760 at Covent Garden. *The London Stage* assigns no author to that piece.

Rich was certainly a splendid harlequin and had a talent for mimicry; *Green Room Gossip* (1809) claimed that Rich spoiled a horn player's concert by sitting opposite him and imitating a man eating a lemon. Some of the century's harlequins who were students of Rich were Woodward, Arthur, and Lalauze, and though Rich's ability to coach tragedians may be questioned, he seems to have been a fine teacher of comic dancers and mimes. Arthur Murphy, who was sometimes critical of Rich, admired his ability as a harlequin; "they may say what they will of the Hero of Drury Lane {Garrick}; he only imitates Men, whereas the Covent-garden chief converts himself into a wild Beast, a Bird, or a Serpent with a long Tail, and what not. ..."

Garrick wrote of Rich's ability in the prologue to *Harlequin's Invasion* at Drury Lane on 31 December 1759:

When Lun appeared with matchless art and whim,
He gave the power of speech to every limb;
Tho' mask'd and mute convey'd his quick intent,
And told in frolic gesture what he meant.
But now the motley coat and sword of wood
Require a tongue to make them understood.

In his *History of the Scottish Stage* in 1793 John Jackson remembered that Rich's

presentation of Harlequin hatched from an egg by the heat of the sun {in *Harlequin a Sorcerer*} was a masterpiece of dumb show from the first chipping of the egg, his receiving of motion, his feeling of the ground, his standing upright, to his quick harlequin trip round the empty shell. Through the whole progression every limb had its tongue, and every motion a voice. ...

But the *Grub Street Journal* on 26 April 1733 said, "I allow him the accomplishment of a Harlequin; but the agility of his heels adds not to the judgment of his head."

John Rich had a physical disability that would turn most dancers away from their art. Ryan in his *Dramatic Table Talk*, writing about the performer Michael Stoppelaer, said that "every body {but Stoppelaer} knew that Mr Rich had a great blemish in one of his eyes."

Rich was talking to some of his performers, when Stoppelaer was present, concerning the very disproportioned agreement he had just entered into with one of his tragedians, named Halland {probably Holland}, when Stoppelaer stepped up to him and said, "Upon my soul, sir, he got *the blind side* of you there."

The nettled Rich left the room in fear of further upsetting remarks. Stoppelaer, upon learning of Rich's bad eye, asked the manager's pardon.

Though he was often praised for his elaborate stage presentations, some of Rich's managerial practices brought censure. In addition to the complaints already noted of his treatment of actors, he was criticized for his handling of playwrights. The same issue of the *Grub Street Journal* noted that Rich refused to produce *The Mock Lawyer* unless he himself could make alterations in the text. The author, Edward Phillips

withdrew his play rather than see it tampered with (though it was in time done at Covent Garden).

John Rich was notorious for eccentric behavior. Peg Woffington in her *Memoirs* in 1760 told of going for an interview with Rich at his home in Bloomsbury Square. She found him reclining

on a Couch, with one Leg lolling over the other, his left Hand holding a Play-Book, and his right a China Cup, out of which he was sipping some Tea. Round him, *upon* him, and *about* him, were seven-and-twenty Cats of different Sizes, Ages, and Complexions. Some were staring him in the Face, some eating the Toast and Butter out of his Mouth, some licking the Cream out of a Cup, some frisking about, some lying down, some perched upon his Knee, some upon his Head.

He was also a great taker of snuff and forgetter or mangler of names. Davies in his *Life of David Garrick* spoke of the latter tendency:

The education of Mr. Rich had been grossly neglected; for though his understanding was good, his language was vulgar and ungrammatical: he was a perfect male Slip-slop {in *Joseph Andrews*}. However, he had much entertainment in his conversation, and loved a private party where he could unbend himself. From an habitual inattention, he had contracted a strange and perverse custom of calling every body Mister; and this gave occasion to an unmannerly bon mot of Foote. After Mr. Rich had called him Mister several times, Foote grew warm, and asked him the reason of not calling him by his name. "Don't be angry," said Mr. Rich; "for I some times forget my own name."—"That's extraordinary indeed," replied Foote; "I knew you could not write your own name, but I did not suppose you could forget it."

If Rich did remember a name, he (purposely?) distorted it. According to Take Wilkinson, Garrick became Griskin, Foote Footseye, Shuter Shuttleworth, Barry Barleymore, Sparks Sparkish, Younger Youngmore, and Wilkinson Williamskin or Whittington. When Wilkinson suggested Ned Shuter for the part of the Gardener in *The Spirit of Contradiction*, Rich "took his snuff, stroaked his cat, and said, 'If I give it *Muster Shuttleworth* he will not let me teach him, and he is so idle: I want it perfect *Muster Williamskin*; but I will *larn* you *Muster*, if you will play the part from my tuition.'" Wilkinson noted that "Mr. Rich's peculiarities are not here observed as a novelty, for his best friends then, and those who now remain cannot but say the relation is not more whimsical than true."

John Jackson in his *History* confirmed Rich's wayward way with words:

A candidate for the buskin, being desired to repeat the celebrated soliloquy in Hamlet, began, *to-be*, or not *to-be*. Rich very gravely replied, "Toby may be a very good dog, Mister, but Toby will not do for me. You need not therefore trouble yourself any farther, Mister."

These stories would lead one to believe the statements about Rich's ignorance. Wilkinson spoke of Rich's "*natural* stupidity," Charles Dibdin called him "perhaps the most ignorant of all human beings," and Aaron Hill in *The Prompter* said Rich's "Understanding was born deaf. . . ."

Yet he was clearly not illiterate, and one must wonder if his display of ignorance was a conscious act. John Hill spoke of Rich's reading of his *Orpheus and Eurydice* "with the best Grace of Diction, and not without some Flourishes of Action." And several notes written by Rich have survived to prove that he could, indeed, write. Paul Sawyer in *Theatre Notebook*, 17, quotes a lengthy letter from Rich to the Duke of Bedford dated 9 March 1738:

My Lord Duke

I was in hopes 'ere this of having Monys come into my hands to have discharg'd the Rent due to your Grce, w^{ch} has been occation'd by severe Losses by the Opera's etc. carry'd on by M^r Handel & my self at Cov^t Garden Theatre for these three Years last past, in so much that I must Intreat your Grace's patience for a time and request that you wou'd be so good as to receive the growing Rents by Your Agent till the summe due is discharg'd w^{ch} by Mr. Sadlers acct. made up to Michas last amounts to 587£ 15s—the Improv'd Rent is upwards of 400£ a Year w^{ch} wth other payments I shall at times make hope to clear the same in the Space of One Year. I'll assure your Grace it Concerns me much that I shou'd trouble your Lordship on this Subject having been a Tenant to your Noble Family thes 40 Years & never in arrear till Now—I must likewise beg to lay before your Grace the other Affair depending concerning the Houses in the play house passage leading to Drury Lane Theatre w^{ch} Lease expir'd Xmas last. When My father took the same the Houses were in a very mean & bad condition & the Rents but small & the sume demanded was but 50£. He lay'd out a pretty large Sume that Improv'd & made 'm tenatable, but considering the Time the Repairs took up the Tenem. unlet & the Monys expended on 'em they did not nearly

bring in the Monys lay'd out before such Lease expir'd ab^t w^{ch} time My father dy'd & then my Brother & my Self evn ow'd the same paying them a sume of 200£ since w^{ch} we in wainscoting new flooring Sashing Building upon part of the Waste & throughly fitting up lay'd out upwards of 1000£ being assur'd by some pesons concern'd under your Grace that no advancem.^t wou'd be made on the Ten.^t for any Improvement made in your Graces Estate on so Short a Lease but on application made to M^r Holt to renew the sume demanded is 400£ now if your Grace wou'd be so good as to take it into Consideration & Lessen some some {sic} part of the sume which is wholly owing to the Improvem.^{ts} made, it woud at all times be an Incouragem.^t for a Tenant to Inrich an Estate rather than let it decay & ware out wth the Lease w^{ch} I'm afraid is too often the Case these particulars

I submit to your Graces Determination first begging pardon for this long Epistle & next leave to Subscribe my Self
Your Grace's most Obed.^t humble Serv.^t

Jn.^o Rich

By eighteenth-century standards, Rich wrote well enough.

One wonders, too, how Rich could have gained so many friends among the nobility and literati if he was as ignorant as his detractors claimed. In 1735, for example, he founded the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks, a social club that flourished into the nineteenth century. One story has it that Rich enjoyed broiling his own steaks in a room at the top of Covent Garden Theatre (the paint room, probably) and that the Earl of Peterborough used to drop by, sometimes with friends; the meetings became periodic, on Saturdays. That story is pleasant, but Peterborough is not listed as a member of the Society, so the following version of the founding, presented by Allen in *Clubs of Augustan London*, is probably closer to the truth: Rich and his scene painter George Lambert invited some gentlemen of fashion to join them in witty conversations over beefsteaks. Members of the Beefsteaks included William Hogarth, Samuel Johnson, Charles Churchill, John Wilkes, the Prince of Wales (later George IV), and Theophilus Cibber. John Rich moved in distinguished circles, was a very successful manager, and accumulated a sizable fortune.

Rich also worked on good terms with England's greatest composer of the century, Handel, who, in his will of 4 August 1757, left to Rich the "Great Organ that stands at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden" and had been used in the oratorio season each spring, usually with the composer at the keyboard.

And though Davies was one of those who noted Rich's lack of formal education, he was also quick to praise Rich's generous nature:

At Uxbridge Mr. Rich was esteemed an obliging neighbour, a hospitable country gentleman, and a very kind landlord. He took great delight in promoting and celebrating, at his own expense, the weddings of his young tenants, and making the new-married pair happy. I am well assured, that the great consolation of this gentleman, in his dying moments, proceeded from the recollection of his many charitable actions; which he indeed had forgotten, till his friends, by bestowing their commendations on him for this most amiable Christian virtue, recalled them to his mind.

Portraits known to be of John Rich, and those purported to be, include:

1. By unknown artist. Unsigned miniature drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum.
2. By unknown artist. Watercolor drawing, showing Rich in a blue coat. In the Folger Shakespeare Library (Art Book D94).
3. By unknown artist. Engraving (?) of Rich in short wig and formal coat. In the Mander and Mitchenson Collection; reproduced by them in *A Pictorial History of the British Theatre* (pl. 75).
4. A portrait of Rich by "Dobson" is recorded in the Huntington Library art files as being in the "Dent Collection." If the artist William Dobson is meant, the picture could hardly be of John Rich, who was born after the artist died.

5. An engraving by G. C. Finden, after F. Smallfield, supposedly depicts Rich reclining on a sofa, surrounded by a room full of cats, and receiving young Peg Woffington's first visit. Published by J. S. Virtue & Co, London.
6. Called "John Rich and his Family." In the Garrick Club (No 466). A conversation picture which was earlier attributed to William Hogarth, who recorded such a picture in a manuscript list of unfinished works in 1731. T. Ryder's engraving of it was published in Ireland's *Graphic Works of Hogarth* in 1799 with the caption "Tho^s. Rich Esq^r. and family." The painting shows five figures: man and wife and three children. Alison Lewis in her dissertation on Joseph Highmore (Harvard, 1975) rejects the attribution to Hogarth and the identification of the sitters as the Rich family and concludes that the painting is by Highmore. Most Hogarth scholars now agree with her. The family group ordered by Rich from Hogarth remains unlocated.
7. "John Rich and Family?," more often called "The Cock Family" or "A Garden Scene at Cowly." By William Hogarth. Ordered by Christopher Cock, November 1728 and still unfinished on 1 January 1732. Passed to Abraham Langford after Cock's death in 1748, it remained for many years in the Langford family until it was purchased at Christie's on 8 December 1961 by Fielding Marshall; sold from the Marshall Collection at Sotheby's in

January 1974 (lot 7). An engraving by Skelton, after Hogarth, was published as a "Garden Scene at Cowley the residence of the late Tho^s Rich Esq^r." Another picture, with the same composition, of the Fountaine family, is in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

8. "A Club of Gentlemen," companion piece to "The Cock Family," by William Hogarth, about 1731. In the Mellon Collection. The group has been identified as John Rich, Henry Fielding, Christopher Cock, Dr Benjamin Hoadly, the Rev John Hoadly, and Sir Edward Walpole.
9. As a spectator in Hogarth's paintings of the Newgate scene in *The Beggar's Opera*. In the Tate Gallery and other locations (see the notice of Lavinia Fenton in this dictionary, iconography Nos 7–13). An engraving by Black, published by Boydell, 1790, with a key plate, identifies Rich as the figure standing, his back to the actors, in a box at stage left (right side of the painting); reproduced in this dictionary with the notice of Thomas Walker.
10. As Harlequin, 1753. Watercolor by unknown artist. Shows Rich full-length, dancing. In the Garrick Club. Engraving by R. Wilkinson, 1818.
11. As Harlequin. By unknown engraver. Full-length, standing, right hand extended, holding hat, stick in left hand.
12. As Harlequin Doctor Faustus in *The Necromancer*, 1723. By unknown engraver. Large, full-length figure of Rich in a dancing posture, in Harlequin costume, black face mask, holding a slapstick in his right hand; windmill and houses in the background.
13. As Harlequin, on stage with others, captioned "Shakespear, Rowe, Johnson { *recte* Jonson }, now are quite undone. / These are thy Tryumphs, thy Exploits O Lun!" Engraving by B. Van der Gucht. Published as frontispiece to an edition of James Miller's *Harlequin Horace*, 1739, and later reprinted in Theophilus Cibber's *Dissertations on Theatrical Subjects*, 1759.
14. On a street stage, holding a bag of money, with spectators about, captioned "Cordial for Low Spirits." By unknown engraver. Published as frontispiece to *An Epistle from Theophilus Cibber to David Garrick*, 1755.
15. In "Rich's Glory, or his Triumphant Entry into Covent Garden," engraving by William Hogarth, December 1732. Satirical print celebrating the move of Rich and his company from his playhouse in Lincoln's Inn Fields to his new Covent Garden Theatre.
16. In "The Theatrical Contest," published by G. Foster on 24 October 1743, by unknown artist. Rich is depicted with numerous other theatrical persons in this print, which is a satire on Fleetwood's problems with his rebellious actors, including Garrick and Macklin, at Drury Lane Theatre. Details and background of this print are given in the British Museum *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, No 2599. Reproduced in this dictionary with the notice of Charles Fleetwood.
17. In "Britannia Disturb'd or an Invasion by French Strolers." A satirical print depicting Rich as Lun and Garrick as Fribble, both seated in the lap of Britannia, who says, "Lunn and Fribble are my only Theatrical Children I will Cherish no Foreign Vagrants." By unknown engraver, published about 1749. Example in the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Rich, Mrs John the third. *See* STEVENS, MRS, STAGE NAME OF PRISCILLA WILFORD.

Rich, Le. *See* LA RICH.

Richard. *See* RICHARDS.

Richards, Mr [*fl.* 1723–1728], *boxkeeper*.

A Mr Richards shared a benefit with three others at the Haymarket Theatre on 20 February 1724. He had evidently been working at the theatre since at least December 1723 and was very likely the Richards who served on 15 May 1728 at Lincoln's Inn Fields as an additional boxkeeper. The latter information derives from the theatre accounts at Harvard and is not in *The London Stage*.

Richards, Mr [*fl.* 1723–1744?], *actor, dancer?*

The name "Richards" appeared occasionally opposite male roles on the playbills of various theatres from 1723 to 1744. There is no certainty, however, that one man in his time played all those parts. At the Haymarket on 12 December 1723 a Richards was the Second Companion in *The Female Fops* (in a performance said to be by amateurs); there on 20 February 1724 he shared a benefit with three other